

585 /192 cont./ a seated position. The one who reaches him first
524 receives a "pitjuru," a luck-bringing object, sometimes in the
form of a coin or ornament. However, care is always taken
that the woman wins. On the other hand, she is not allowed to
win directly. If she or her husband is very close to the one who
knocked, another one will knock who is seated at the other side
of the circle, and then they must again push themselves thither.
But once the highest guest has knocked upon the ground, no one
knocks anymore. He does this only when the man does not have
a chance of getting to him first, so that the bride therefore re-
ceives the pitjuru from him. "Amèsu" is, therefore, as it were,
a game in which the young couple compete with each other,
but whose outcome is already fixed from the outset. It is com-
[554] pared to a cock fight. It only takes place when there are high
guests present at the festival. It is pleasant for the person who
gives the festival if "amèsu" takes place, for that means that
he had /193/ high guests, and that means that he is in their
favor. For the young man, this pushing competition is un-
[522] pleasant because he always loses to his bride, and people open-
ly make fun of this.

The First Joint Meal

585 The day after the nikka', man and wife for the first time
"eat" together. Ritual and play are here closely interwoven.
There is no question of ordinary eating. One of the older women
takes a handful of rice with coconut oil and sugar, briefly holds
this above the incense vessel, mumbles a spell over it, and then
[824] gives this to the young woman to eat. Coconut oil, that is to
say, fat, is a symbol of wealth; sugar is a symbol of love and
sweetness. She is told to bring this handful of food momentarily
to her mouth, and then to offer it to the young husband seated
next to her. The people around watch to see how he reacts.
If he opens his mouth quickly, this means that he likes her.
"Your cock is conquered," the men at that point laughingly